



LYNTON & BARNSTAPLE RAILWAY TRUST

NEWSLETTER No 81– August 2023

Woody Bay – Summer 2023

With everything else going on in the world and on the L&B it is important to remember that there is much to celebrate within the Railway and especially at Woody Bay.

Our visitors are the means of our survival; they are the reason so many of us work so hard; they make and improve our reputation; they are vital to the development of the Railway, and they hold our future in their hands. The team of staff and volunteers at Woody Bay look after these people every day we operate, and the feedback shows that they are doing a fantastic job.

Here are some quotes:

Mother to platform assistant after her 2 boys had been on the footplate talking to the loco crew:

“Thank you so much for this, they’ll be talking about this all week”.

Small boy to his parents:

“I don’t like it here, I LOVE it, it’s my favourite place ever.”

We score 4.5 on Tripadvisor which is far above average for a heritage railway, and here is why:

The site is run by volunteers who genuinely want to make this a great experience for its guests and it shows. The train journey is short but the kids loved the experience and the small woodland walk is a good leg stretch.

Although the Railway is currently of limited scope, what the volunteers have achieved so far is amazing, and their enthusiasm infectious. Topped the visit off with one of the best cream teas we've ever had!

A total gem of a heritage railway at a reasonable charge. Beautiful train pulling well maintained coaches. Very friendly and helpful staff. Tea room serves a great cream tea and food you can sit inside or out to eat.

Passenger numbers demonstrate that the efforts being made are bearing fruit. Numbers for May to mid-August are up 16% on the same period in 2022 while holiday bookings in North Devon are down around 20%.

This bucking of the trend is good news of course but there is still more. The average spend per passenger is also up by around the same percentage despite the decision to allow kids to go free (under 14!). This cannot be accounted for by fare rises so it must be due in good measure to the new tearoom and the team that are giving our passengers great service and refreshments. The room itself is a welcome comfort zone for the passengers on the Devon days where the wind tries to knock you over – and there have been plenty of them this season! What is inescapable when you spend a day on the footplate, as a guard, in the tearoom or in the shop, people are staying at the Railway for longer and enjoying their time with us.

Behind the Scenes

Work around the station continues with a sharp focus on safety at height. The shed is now tidier, the floors are levelled, and the pit is well protected.

Work on the Bagnall 2819 is progressing really well with John, Tom and James on a mission it seems. If you can get to the Gala, the Bagnall will be out of the shed and visible so you will be able to see the progress for yourself.

Our new tamping machine has arrived and is ready to go. With seven-day running, we cannot make use of it just yet so the manufacturer's training team is coming in mid-September to get the gang trained and under way.

At the end of another long and challenging carriage restoration, the paint shop team have turned their skills onto freshening up two more carriages with an interim touch-up revarnishing. The results are of such a high standard and we are so lucky to have Jim Pounds and his team who are so diligent, skilful and knowledgeable.

It is especially sad that we lost Tony Cross from the shop team recently and he will be missed by all who knew his kind and welcoming face behind the counter.

Upstairs, the office has been transformed by our team of electricians and painters, so that it was fit to welcome Rebecca when she arrived. She has been a vital addition to the staff, freeing up Mark Halliday who is working so hard and so successfully at the Old Station Inn. Rebecca has been improving the online shop offering and has just completed an eye-catching poster for this year's Gala.

Ongoing work on the main station building has included repairing rotten wood, replacing a window, notice boards and around the station, bench repairs, signal repainting, general site work of undergrowth and grass-cutting, improving paths as required.

The weekday gangs also cleared and dug out drains and paths at Rowley Cross following an earlier working weekend start on this.

Work on our new box van continues with all the rust removed behind the metal work and fully de-rusted and rubbed back. Woodwork now sealed and new roof covering to follow before fitting out inside.

Regular track and signal inspections, maintenance and oiling as required is ongoing every week.

Also with the day-to-day of being open to the public , keeping the railway running and our customers happy takes up a lot of our time but it is well worth it.

Looking Ahead

There is always work needed around the station and General Manager Stuart's list just seems to get longer. The work weekends in the closed season will be as important as they always are, so please come along if you possible can. The dates are; **November 17th/ 18th /19th January 19th/20th/21st
March 15th/16th/17th**

Members' Forum will be held on Saturday 11th November, doors open at 11.00. Venue to be confirmed

The 7 ¼ in. railway is under new management and we are very keen to build a new team to take over our very good but under-used facility. Please contact the station if you would like to join us – we are planning to run a service at the Gala.

After that, we will need help to make some more improvements, changing some point work and making the line even more passenger-friendly and attractive.

Stuart & Malcolm

Countryside Stewardship Hedgerow and Boundaries Grant

Following the receipt of a grant from the DEFRA Countryside Stewardship Fund, the Trust will be embarking in early October on the restoration on nearly 850m of railway boundary restoration. The work entails hedge-laying and coppicing of the existing overgrown boundaries and replanting any gaps. Repairs to the stone and earth banks will also be carried out as necessary.

The work will be carried out by a locally-based hedge-layer and there will be opportunities for volunteers to help with the replanting and other items.

The work will take place on the trackbed between Bridge 65 (Killington Lane) and Bridge 63 (Parracombe Lane). Further sections are at Cricket Field Lane and at Rowley Moor Farm behind the Exmoor National Park car park. The final lengths are between Bridge 54 (Pound Lane) and Bridge 53 (Wistlandpound Lane).

The Trust will be applying for a further grant from the Countryside Stewardship Fund to restore other lengths of our boundary.

Chris Duffell

Outline proposals to extend from Killington Lane

Following a very helpful and thorough response from Exmoor National Park to our pre-application enquiry to extend the operational railway from Killington Lane to Cricket Field Lane, our outline proposals are described and illustrated below:



During planning consultation over the withdrawn section 73 planning application a significant number of Parracombe residents expressed concern over the use of Parracombe Churchtown Halt as a temporary turn-around facility. This included anxiety that the facility could become permanent,

impact of noise and smoke from run around and waiting trains in close proximity to dwellings, potential traffic impact from additional cars using Churchtown Lane, proximity to Parracombe school, and proximity to listed buildings.

In order to mitigate as much as possible, an alternative site for the train return facility has been identified at Cricket Field Lane. This lies outside Parracombe conservation zone and is more than 150m from the nearest dwelling, Heddon Hall, and 400m from Churchtown Bridge. The proposed run-around loop and platform will be located within the original cutting to the south of Parracombe Lane Bridge, so that it will be hidden from view from most directions. Cricket Field Lane is a narrow unsurfaced track; it is not connected to the A39 and is inaccessible by cars.

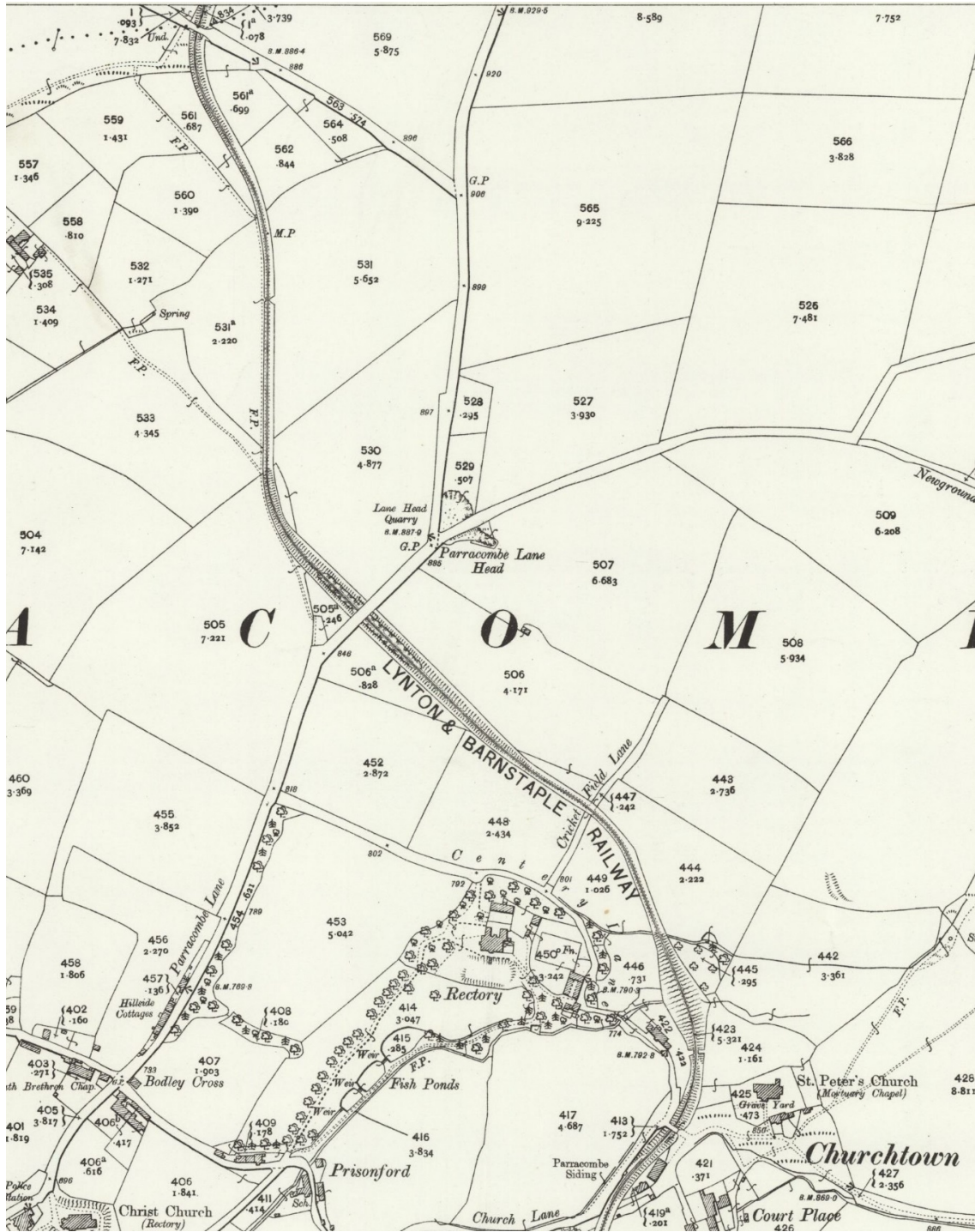
The temporary halt will operate in exactly the same manner as Killington Lane Halt does now. Passengers will purchase their tickets at Woody Bay Station where there is a dedicated carpark, toilet facilities, shop and tearoom. They may leave the train at Cricket Field Lane returning on a later service. Current passenger records show that on average two people per day take this option.

Extending the railway from Killington Lane to Cricket Field Lane will add approximately 0.5 mile to the length of the existing journey. Although this may not sound much it will give the visitor new views of the Exmoor countryside. Firstly, emerging from under Killington Lane (Bridge 65), the line crosses Higher Bodley Farm including crossing cattle creep Bridge 64 before running under Parracombe Lane (Bridge 63) into the cutting on the approach to Cricket Field Lane. The railway owns the track bed from Cricket Field Lane to Churchtown including the bungalow and garden that currently stands on the site of the former Parracombe Halt.

The gradient of the original railway from Bridge 65 to Cricket Field Lane was 1 in 50. For operational safety reasons the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) recommend that where engines uncouple and run around the gradient should be no steeper than 1 in 500. By maintaining this gradient after the line passes under bridge 63 additional width of track bed can be formed higher in the original cutting to accommodate a second track forming the run-around loop. At the end of the loop the track will be approximately 2.5m higher than the original line. From this point the heads hunt will descend to a substantial buffer stop at the end of the small triangular enclosure beside Cricket Field Lane. In the future, when the line is further extended through Parracombe and onwards towards Blackmoor Gate the headshunt will revert to a siding and the original gradient of 1 in 50 will be reinstated on the running line.

Timetable options have demonstrated that there is no operational requirement for a loop at Parracombe and there is no need for a scheduled stop. Therefore it is proposed that when further extension is undertaken, Parracombe Halt should be reinstated in its original form with just a single track, the water tank and the platform shelter. The decision as to whether trains regularly stop here, by request or not at all will be put to the parish council and residents of Parracombe.

When these proposals have been further developed, a public meeting will be organised through Parracombe Parish Council to explain and discuss the scheme with local residents prior to finalisation and submission of a planning application.



Extract from 1904 Ordnance Survey

CIC Shares

A good way to support the railway is to purchase shares in the Community Interest Company. Receipts from share sales are committed to the development of the railway and are currently used in support of the planned extension of the railway.

Illustrated share certificates are issued to all shareholders with a shareholding of 100 or more shares, each with a nominal value of £1 (minimum purchase £100). Shares can be obtained by direct purchase or by subscription of £10 or more each month.

The benefits attached to share ownership are as follows:

100 – 199 shares:	2 free 'day rover' tickets per annum
200 – 499 shares:	4 free 'day rover' tickets per annum
500 – 999 shares:	8 free 'day rover' tickets per annum
1000 – 1999 shares:	Pass for unlimited free travel for 1 year for shareholder
2000 – 2999 shares:	As above for shareholder and one family guest
3000 plus shares:	As above for shareholder and up to three family guests

Free ticket entitlements are awarded against shareholdings at 31st December each year and can be claimed at Woody Bay Station from 1st February. Share application forms and direct debit mandate forms can be downloaded from the L&B website or forwarded by request to the Company Secretary, Brom Bromidge, 33 Cavie Road, Braunton, Devon EX33 1DX, or telephone Brom on 01271 814475.

Rowley Moor Farm access road

Work began during the last week of February and was completed in May, we are grateful to our contractor Macplant for achieving this at short notice.

Construction of the new road is completed and has provided a safe access to Rowley Farm to both the farm entrance and the house access, a new affordable dwelling for staff, our workshop and stores, and also in the future to the engine shed site. The road is designed to accommodate articulated vehicles and to enable their safe entrance.

The improvement to the appearance of the site, the increased safety and also the ability to use the site access with larger vehicles are great assets and fit the access for future needs.

John Barton

RUMOURS

Well, who would have guessed that from time to time stories, rumours, assumptions, misconceptions and misunderstandings about the Railway emerge in various places, forums or just as passing conversations? Hardly surprising when we have over 3000 members spread across the country and around the world.

Official L&B railway news or information is only posted only on the L&B railway website, in the L&B magazine or in members' Newsletters.

This is a new section in the Newsletter to address these topics:

Confusion over Return to Parracombe fund

The Trust holds money in general funds and restricted funds. Monies donated for specific purposes are held in restricted funds; otherwise cash is held in general funds which enables necessary flexibility for the Trust to finance liabilities and opportunities as they may arise.

The return to Parracombe appeal was launched with a commitment by the Trust to provide £450,000 of support to that project from general funds.

A total of £241,778.29 is currently held in the Return to Parracombe appeal fund. In addition, donations totalling £20,744.84 received before the appeal fund was started are held in the Killington Lane Fund.

The reported £700,000 available for return to Parracombe as reported in November 2022 comprised the total of these three figures.

After the s73 planning application was withdrawn, some of the money allocated from general funds was used to pay for the new access road into Rowley Moor farm. That deficit now has to be made good and the balance of funds required to reach Cricket Field Lane will have to be raised. The extension appeal will be relaunched shortly.

Misunderstandings over L&B Trust's relationship with L&B Blackmoor Company Plc (LBBC).

The L&BR Trust has a shareholding of £50,000 (A class voting shares) and is the controlling shareholder in LBBC which owns and operates the Old Station Inn. This includes the Inn, a 6 bedroom house and the surrounding land. The final piece of the funding jigsaw to purchase the Old Station Inn (OSHI) was a loan from the Trust of £250,000 over ten years, agreed in 2020. This was necessary as the then potential bank lender reduced the percentage Loan to Value being offered. The

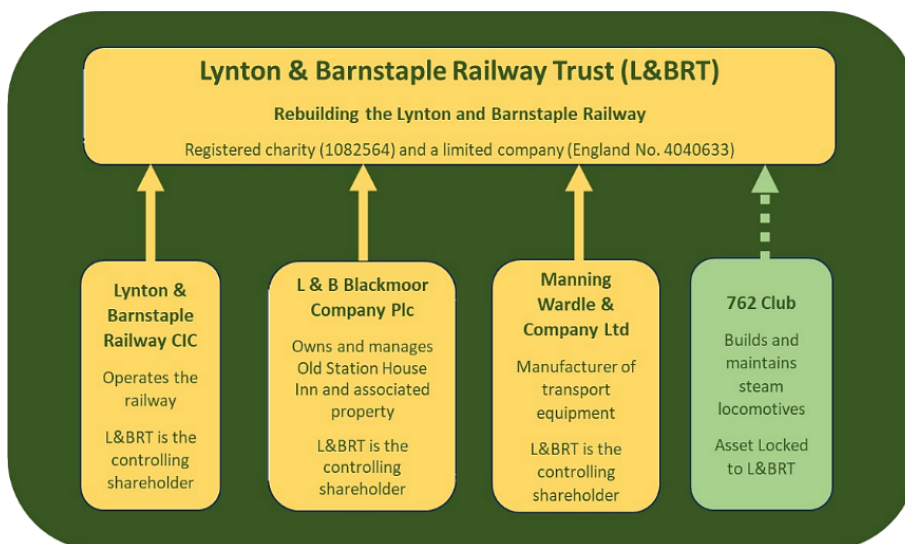
Trust also received donations specifically to support LBBC and is now the holder of £203,000 LBBC B Class Shares as a result of these donations.

During the final purchase negotiations for the Old Station Inn additional value was secured with the transfer of the government RHI heating tariff (grant) which runs for another 12 years and adds about £250,000 to the asset valuations expected in the original share prospectus.

The L&BR Trust also owns all the land required for the railway and new station at Blackmoor Gate that was formerly part of the Old Station Inn landholding.

Clarification of relationships between the various L&B Organisations

There are several organisations directly linked to the Trust. There are also a number of organisations that are independently managed and financed. The activities of these organisations are complementary and contribute to the ultimate aim of reinstating the Lynton and Barnstaple railway.



Independent Organisations

Exmoor Associates CIC

A private company established to acquire track bed south of Wistlandpound

Yeo Valley Trust

A private company set up to acquire and maintain railway infrastructure south of Wistlandpound

Bagnall 2819 Company Limited

Private company that owns Bagnall 2819 Sir George Newnes formerly Charles Wytock

Misconceptions over Planning Permission

Reports in Newsletters 79 and 80 explained the planning processes and reasons for decisions taken and the disappointing outcome.

In summary, the s73 application was withdrawn to avert potential refusal after problematic legal technicalities raised by ENPA only twelve months after discussions about the application had started. The original planning approvals expired because the railway was unable to satisfy the onerous Grampian conditions that required 'all the land be owned, and all the funds obtained' before any work could commence.

It is worth remembering that it is Planning Authorities who determine the success or failure of all planning applications, not applicants.

Pursuit of Option C outlined in the Options consultation was supported by the vast majority of respondents (957 in favour /52 against). A separate report on progress with the proposal to extend the railway to Cricket Field Lane is published elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Talk of recent incidents of the Trust buying land south of Wistlandpound.

Because of the extent of the L&B restoration project the L&BR Trust is focused on acquisition of land north of Wistlandpound Dam and extension of the existing operational line at Woody Bay. It does not actively seek to acquire trackbed south of the dam where Exmoor Associates are actively engaged in that task for future reinstatement of the railway when needed.

The Trust does own one section of track bed just north of Bratton Fleming Station. This was acquired in 2015 following an approach by the owner and in accordance with his wishes.

In the same year another landowner approached the Trust soliciting an offer for his land north of Chumhill near Lancey Brook Viaduct. This did not proceed.

L&BR CIC owns Chelfham Station and its associated track bed, all of which is asset-locked to the Trust. It was originally acquired in 1999 by the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Estates Company under a joint offer with Distant Point Partnership to acquire the station master's house as well. In 2007 the Estates Company was made a subsidiary of the Trust and subsequently converted into the Lynton & Barnstaple Railway CIC. The Trust supports work at Chelfham in various ways, including the allocation of Gift Aid claimed on donations received

Reciprocal Arrangements

A reminder that the West Somerset Railway and Lynton and Barnstaple Railway have arranged reciprocal travel arrangements for both our passengers and volunteers and staff from March 2023

WSR 2023 tickets (paper tickets) can be used at the L&B to obtain 10% off the same type of ticket on either an adult or family ticket.

Lynton and Barnstaple Railway tickets can be kept and used on the West Somerset Railway for a 10% discount.

Staff / Volunteers of both the WSR and L&B railways on production of a valid HOPs ID card are entitled to / will receive 'Privilege rate' 75% discount off a ticket price on the day on the opposite railways, one discount per HOPs card on both railways. (This is separate from the HRA 'Heritage Rail' pass scheme, but only one can be used at one time)

We have had a leaflet swap to promote each other's railway and the 'Exmoor Coaster' open-top bus which passes Woody Bay not only joins the railways together but gives the public many days-out options.

S Nelhams

Volunteers wanted for the Gala Car Park Crew

Anyone visiting the Gala who can spare perhaps 3 hours of their time on either Saturday or Sunday is invited to join the Car Park Crew, either at Woody Bay or Killington Lane. Volunteering gives one free admission to the Gala. L&B branded Hi-viz jackets are provided.

Please send any offers of help to Anne Belsey at annebelsey34@gmail.com or phone 01271 883614

Anne Belsey

Carriage Works Report - August 2023

Van 23

Now that an additional engineer is employed at Woody Bay we look forward to other projects being worked on in addition to normal day-to-day running jobs and the underframe and bogies for Van 23 will now be further up 'the list'. Later in the year it is hoped that this will be progressed and delivered to Fridaywood Farm at Colchester. When this happens we will stop work on Carriage No 9 and finish Van 23 ready for delivery back to North Devon in mid-2024.

Please note that the Van 23 Appeal is still open and more funds will be required to achieve completion. This is the only surviving example of L&BR goods rolling stock – an truly unique item.

Carriage No 9

We are continuing our work on the body of this Carriage although it still looks like various piles of wood at the moment. (e.g. this pile is the roof timber and that pile is the side panels!)

But it is progressing. We have been helped this month by young 14 years old John Irons and his dad Richard at one end of the age profile and by other eighty year old members at the other; so if you want to join in please give us a phone call.

David Ely has been completing his modern art installation on the wall of the workshop (otherwise known as a frame to manufacture laminated roof beams). Seat parts are being finished and may start to look like 3rd Class seats soon.

Those of you that give us money each month are keeping this all going and if anybody would like to try a day working on Carriages we would make them very welcome.

The King has recognised my contribution to 'Heritage' with the award of the British Empire Medal but This is really a recognition of all the work on Carriages over many years by all of us in the EAST Group not just me.

Charles Summers B.E.M.